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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 SS-15 PM-05  
SP-02 L-03 CA-01 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00  
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O 072051Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4468

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s):

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[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 965

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, AR  
SUBJECT: PROGRESS REPORT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN  
ARGENTINA

REF: STATE 31249

1. THE EMBASSY USED THE FOLLOWING INDICATORS BY WHICH TO  
MEASURE PROGRESS OF LACK THEREOF WITH REGARD TO THE ARGENTINE  
GOVERNMENT'S OBSERVATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. COMMENTS RELATE  
PRIMARILY TO DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PAST THREE MONTHS:

A. A. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RIGHT OF OPTION--  
NEW PROGRAM NOW DEFINITELY BEING IMPLEMENTED BY GOA. SOME  
RECENT APPROVALS, SUCH AS GUILLERMO VOGLER AND PINERO SISTERS  
WERE PROCESSED UNDER PREVIOUS PROCEDURE. GOA HAS TOLD US AND  
OTHER EMBASSIES THEY WILL HELP IN HARMONIZING PROCEDURAL  
ASPECTS OF PROGRAM WITH COUNTRIES' VISA REQUIREMENTS.

B. REGULARIZATION OF THE STATUS OF PRISONERS --  
(THIS INCLUDES PUBLICATION OF NAMES OF PEOPLE ARRESTED OR  
RELEASED FROM CUSTODY UNDER EXECUTIVE--STATE OF SEIGE--PEN,  
AS WELL AS CURRENT LISTS OF PRISONERS HELD UNDER THE PEN.)  
APPROXIMATELY 440 HELD UNDER THE PEN HAVE BEEN RELEASED  
FROM PEN SINCE CHRISTMAS, OF WHICH 389 WERE ON THE CHRISTMAS

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LIST. LIMITED NUMBERS OF EXPULSIONS HAVE CONTINUED TO BE  
ANNOUNCED. THE PUBLICATION ON FEB 3 OF A PARTIAL LIST OF

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705 PRISONERS HELD UNDER PEN WAS A SIGNIFICANT EVENT WHICH WILL GENERATE INCREASING PRESSURE ON GOA TO CONTINUE TO PUBLISH MORE SUCH LISTS.

C. TREATMENT OF PERSONS BEING HELD --

ICRC JAIL VISITS RESUMED DEC 77. THEY REPORT POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE BEING HELD UNDER SAME PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AS OTHER PRISONERS. IN LAST SIX MONTHS GOA HAS ADOPTED PROGRAMS TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR SUSPECTED TERRORISTS TO SURRENDER TO GOVERNMENT AND RECEIVE GUARANTEES OF HUMANE TREATMENT. COOPERATIVE PRISONERS RECEIVE REDUCED SENTENCES.

D. DISAPPEARANCES -- OUR DATA SHOW THESE AS DECLINING, IN PART, NO DOUBT, TO THE DECLINE IN REMAINING NUMBERS OF SUSPECTS, AS WELL AS MORE SELECTIVE TARGETING. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT SECURITY FORCES HAVE ABANDONED THEIR PRACTICE OF ABDUCTION OF SUSPECTS. THERE ARE CONTINUING REPORTS OF EXTRA-LEGAL DETENTION CENTERS AND OF EXECUTIONS OF ABDUCTEES. THERE IS SCANT INFORMATION ON THESE AREAS, SO NO TREND CAN BE IDENTIFIED.

F. TORTURE -- WE HAVE NO INFORMATION TO SUGGEST THAT SECURITY FORCES HAVE ABANDONED PRACTICE OF TORTURE TO OBTAIN INFORMATION.

G. GREATER CONTROL OVER THE SERVICES EMPLOYED IN CONTROLLING SUBVERSION --

WE HAVE HEARD REPORTS THAT PRESIDENCY IS CONTINUING EFFORTS TO OVERCOME RESISTANCE TO REORGANIZE COUNTERSUBVERSIVE OPERATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE IN THE FEDERAL DISTRICT INTO A SINGLE UNIT STAFFED BY ALL THREE SERVICES, WITH OBJECT OF ACHIEVING CLOSER CONTROLS, AND VIRTUALLY ELIMINATING POS-

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SIBILITY OF UNAUTHORIZED OPERATIONS. THIS COMPLEMENTS REPORTS OF EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH TIGHER CONTROLS OVER SECURITY FORCES AND TO PUNISH CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES BY POLICE CARRIED OUT IN NAME OF COMBATTING SUBVERSION. ROLLS OF POLICE HAVE BEGUN TO BE REDUCED. ARMED FORCES ARE RESUMING THEIR CONVENTIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CYCLES WICH HAD BEEN SUSPENDED TO DIVERT RESOURCES TO COUNTERSUBVERSIVE PROGRAMS.

2. NOT MEASURABLE, BUT OF EQUAL OR GREATER IMPORTANCE IS THE MATTER OF "SENSITIVITY"--THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE GOVERNING ESTABLISHMENT SEES THE NEED OF PUTTING IN ORDER

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ITS EFFORTS AGAINST TERRORISM, WHETHER BECAUSE OF DOMESTIC OPINION, FOREIGN PRESSURES OR SOME INNER SENSE OF LEGALITY AND JUSTICE. IN PAST, GOA HAS STONEWALLED CHARGES OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, CALL ATTENTION TO ABUSES BY TERRORISTS. SIGNIFICANT EVENT OCCURRED FEB 6 WHEN SEVERAL FONOFF OFFICIALS CALLED IN EMBOFF TO COMPLAIN OF AMBASSADOR CASTRO'S PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF ARGENTINA'S BAD HUMAN RIGHTS IMAGE OVERSEAS (BA 493). THEY SPELLED OUT A LIST OF RECENT ACTIONS SUCH AS THE INAUGURATION OF THE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM, LIST OF DETAINEES, AND ACTIONS ON HIGH-INTEREST US CASES SUCH AS VOGLER AND DEUTSCH, ALL OF WHICH RESPONDED TO PROBLEM AND FOR WHICH GOA SHOULD RECEIVE CREDIT. THEY ASKED WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO TO SHOW WE ARE SOLVING PROBLEM? THIS IS A NEW RESPONSE FROM A GOA OFFICIAL. IN PAST THEIR TACTIC HAS BEEN TO TEMPORIZE, APPARENTLY ASSUMING USG WOULD LOSE INTEREST.

3. WE STILL HAVE NO SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION REGARDING WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ABDUCTION OF THE FRENCH NUNS AND THEIR ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT ASSOCIATES, ALTHOUGH IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVE THAT ELEMENTS OF THE SECURITY FORCES WERE INVOLVED. WE KNOW THAT MANY IN THE GOVERNMENT AND EVEN THE SECURITY FORCES WERE APPALLED BY THESE ABDUCTIONS. BESIDES THE NUNS AND THEIR ASSOCIATES, THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED REPORTS OF SOME 26 DISAPPEARANCE

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CASES FROM DECEMBER 1, 1977 TO JANUARY 20, 1978, WHICH IS COMPARABLE TO THE FIGURE FOR THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

4. WE COMMEND TO DEPT THE EXCELLENT DEC 77 REPORT ON ARGENTINA TO AAAS BY EMILIO DADDARIO WITH WHICH WE AGREE, PARTICULARLY WITH HIS COMMENT ON IMPACT ABROAD OF THE PRESIDENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY, AND THE PRESCRIPTION IN FINAL PARAGRAPH: QUOTE WHILE THE SITUATION IN ARGENTINA IS AN UNHAPPY ONE, WE MUST FACE THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS STRONGLY ENTRENCHED AND HAS SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FROM THE PEOPLE. THE BRIGHTEST PROSPECT FOR BETTERMENT OF THE REPRESSED AND IMPRISONED SCIENTISTS IS THROUGH STEP-BY-STEP PROGRESS TOWARDS MODERATION, ACKNOWLEDGING THE POSITIVE ACTIONS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT NOW SEEMS READY TO TAKE, AND ENCOURAGING OTHERS. END QUOTE.

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